

References

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Exceptionally early spring records in 1995

The relatively mild winter 1994/95 and several very warm days in late April 1995 at Dartford have resulted in several moth species emerging earlier than usual. In the species listed all but one, possibly two, concern over-wintering pupae, and for all species except one the emergence has been earlier than recorded previously over a twenty-five year period. All records refer to my garden m.v. light. The table gives the earliest record for 1995 for each species, the previous earliest record and the average first record for the period.

Most of these early records reflect a general early emergence in the species, this being especially noteworthy in the case of *Selenia tetralunaria*.

Species	1995	Previous earliest		Average
<i>Pheosia tremula</i> L.	30.iv.	6.v.	1990	22.v.
<i>Falcaria lacertinaria</i> L.	30.iv.	2.v.	1975	19.v.
<i>Acronicta psi</i> L.	1.v.	5.v.	1976	24.v.
<i>Acronicta rumicis</i> L.	23.iv.	16.iv.	1980	16.v.
<i>Abrostola tripartita</i> Hufn.	17.iv.	5.v.	1976/90	24.v.
<i>Lobophora halterata</i> Hufn.	24.iv.	9.v.	1993	28.v.
<i>Thera britannica</i> Turn.	24.iv.	5.v.	1990	31.v.
<i>Selenia tetralunaria</i> Hufn.	31.iii.	17.iv.	1988	7.v.
<i>Idea aersata</i> L.	1.vi.	3.vi.	1985	24.vi.
<i>Colocasia coryli</i> L.	5.iv.	13.iv.	1980	2.v.

Specimens appeared as follows: 31.iii.(3), 2.iv., 2.v. and 6.v. The second generation produced its first specimen on 7 July, followed by a dozen others until 6 August. Until 1989 the average first date for this generation was 24 July, but from 1990 to 1994 it was 13 July. Of the other species *Pheosia tremula* and *Falcaria lacertinaria* produced a very early first generation, other specimens being recorded in the days following the first arrivals. *Acronicta psi* and *A. rumicis* are noted for irregularity in appearance; *A. psi* was not seen again until 17 June, and its main emergence was during July and August, but *A. rumicis* was seen mainly in the first six days of May, including five on 4 May and the last of fifteen on 3 June, so in general an early first generation.

In other species mentioned the first record for the season was an isolated one; thus although *Abrostola tripartita* was seen on 17 April, the next one did not appear until 1 May, and the third on 7 May.

1995 has followed a short sequence of mild winters, but unlike some of the previous years it was followed by a warm April and May. Perhaps the main value of reporting these early emergences is to remind us that such phenomena recur at intervals in our variable climate, and that they are not something new. Thus in *Ent. Rec.* 28 it is reported that on 10 February 1916 L.W. Newman exhibited at the South London Natural History Society meeting hawthorn almost fully out in leaf and fully opened willow catkins.—B.K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HN.